



# The Ram and Ewe

Phone (403) 337-2800 \* Fax(403)337-2418 \* E-mail pat@pasu.com

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## Shopping for a new country.

We lived in Somersetwest on a half acre of land on the slopes of the Helderberg Mountain a thirty minute commute to work in Cape Town. The view from the living room was of this beautiful seductive Mountain. To right of that we could see the Somersetwest valley leading up to the Hottentots range and from upstairs looking back you could just see False Bay and the white sands of the Strand Beach.

It was in wine country, blessed with a typical Mediterranean climate. Warm dry summers and cool wet winters. Every summer weekend was spent either swimming and fishing at the beach or at private pool parties with barbecues friends and luscious Cape wines our scantily clad bodies caressed by zephyr breezes bearing the smell of pine trees, fynbos and the ocean.

The winters brought us indoors where large fires would be lit in spacious fireplaces to keep the house warm as there was no central heating. We would cozy up to the fire with family and friends and, naturally, with a glass of wine.

Yet beneath all this the pot was beginning to boil and the soul of Africa, black and white, was rising to the surface. The white regime, in its dying throes, was increasingly paranoid about any subversive activity imagined or real and relentlessly persecuted anyone whose ideas conflicted with state policy. Those ideal barbecues had their tense moments as left and right would broach the subject of injustices on our doorstep. Families who had lived for multiple generations in decent homes and who had a culture and education to be proud of, were relocated because their skin was an off shade of white and thus should be segregated from the "pure race".

Being too vocal in matters opposing government policy and fraternizing with the wrong

side would be an invitation for the secret police to make an unannounced visit at four am in the morning and it was not for a glass of wine. The situation was tense and paranoia had invaded all rational thought. We slept with a loaded .38 Police Special revolver under the pillow. Now it was time to shop for a new country.

Sue's mother was a Canadian and had schooled in Calgary and so Canada seemed to be the logical choice. It was decided that we would take off seven weeks and check the country out. Actually, Sue had visited the country on two previous occasions and loved it. This was a her sales job to convince me of its merits as I had no intention of residing in a country whose a culture had spawned my mother-in-law, imagining that a substantial portion of the mature female population to be of similar character. As I understood it, the problem went beyond my charming self, but from the fact that she was a typical Canadian WASP and I came from a French Catholic family. Talk about oil and vinegar. If I was to leave South Africa I did not want more of the same. In desperation I had even proposed the Falkland Islands as being the idyllic place on earth to live. I couldn't imagine a wee country lost in one corner of the Atlantic Ocean to be anything but tranquil till the end of time. How wrong can one be?

So in November 1975 we left three children with my parents. Philip at that stage was only 8 months old, Genevieve four and a half and Simone somewhere in-between. We fitted ourselves out with backpacks, sleeping bags, a Bluet stove, a small cooking pot, eating utensils and what we perceived to be warm clothing. Our cheapest fair was from Johannesburg via Luxembourg and Iceland to New York City.

We landed in the Big Apple on a Saturday night and left midnight on Sunday for Toronto

# **COMPLETE STORE SALE**

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CONSIGNMENT MERCHANDISE

**SOME SELECTED  
MERCHANDISE  
BELOW  
COST  
OR  
BUY ONE  
AND GET THE SECOND  
HALF PRICE  
APPLIES TO ALL  
MERCHANDISE  
WITHOUT A  
SALE PRICE  
ON IT  
BEGINS**

**1 Feb. and ends 22 Feb**

## **African Feast with David Thiaw & Domba**

An extravagant selection of wonderful African food, followed by Music, stories and dancing.

Saturday April 24

Cocktails at 6 pm / dinner at 7.15 pm

Reservations essential

\$50 per person

Does not include GST or service.

by Greyhound Bus. Our objective was to travel across Canada by bus to Saltspring Island and then back again to Quebec City and from there return to New York City where we would board a plane to Luxembourg and enjoy a two week tour of France focusing on the wine growing regions. The Canadian part of this adventure was research. The French portion of the trip was to specifically enjoy the spirituality of the grape. When you are young there seems to be no limits on what you can do.

We had a limited per diem budget and an unlimited one month bus travel pass, which seemed to be the cheapest way to cover this enormous distance. Time was also a constraint and so we traveled night and day. Often we sat apart so that we could engage fellow travelers in conversation and ask them pertinent questions about the country. Sustenance was acquired from the road house restaurants favoured by Greyhound as a relief stop. We were acquainted with fried onion rings, French fries and gravy and other haut cuisine aspects of the Canadian fare found en route . At major cities we could get a shower and freshen up.

Six days later on a cold grey November afternoon the ferry dropped us off at Saltspring Island where we were to stay with Sue's Aunt for a few days before turning around and heading back in the direction we had come. Sue had assured me that it was a manageable walk from the ferry to where her Aunt lived. Three hours latter we were still walking on a deserted road and quite lost. Eventually we were picked up by a young couple who kindly took us to our destination which proved to be about fifteen miles from the ferry. We were invited to their home for tea the next day.

After spending our first whole day on terra firma and enjoying the freedom of walking around we arrived at this gracious couple's home for a cup of tea. It appears that tea had two meanings in this neck of the woods. The conventional where little dried leaves are added to boiling water resulting in an infusion which is delicately sipped. Conversely, it also means little dried leaves that are rolled in paper, lit and greedily inhaled. We were plied with both and being both curious, quite innocent and not wanting to offend our hosts we partook of tea and "tea."

An hour later and hopelessly out of touch

# St. Patrick's Evening

A gourmet evening of Fine Irish dining, 20th March



## DON'T FORGET

Spring is coming and you are going to need well rotted sheep manure for your flower and vegetables. Available in bags or by the half ton truck load from mid April (after thaw).

## LADIES NIGHT

On the following three months we will be having a special night for ladies (and their men partners if they so wish). A delicious buffet will be served followed by a guest speaker. Please mark these dates down, Reservations are essential.

Fri. 12th Mar.

Fri. 16th April.

Fri. 14th May.

Cocktails 6 to 7Dinner served at 7.15  
\$18.95 (GST & service not included)

## Private Functions

We have a wonderful facility and we wish to attract as many private functions as possible during 2004. Please contact us for the following:

**Weddings One day Seminars  
Private Parties Summer Staff  
Barbecues Anniversaries.**

We are versatile and offer outstanding value.

with reality we waited, as previously arranged, at the bottom of the driveway for Sue's Aunt to collect us. Time had warped, and fearing that we might have been forgotten or worse still that we had missed our rendezvous, we decided to attempt the return journey; in reverse and doing the moon-walk despite the fact that forward locomotion had already a major challenge. When the headlights illuminated us on that dark moonless country road we were desperately clutching each other, hysterically wracked by uncontrollable laughter.

Aunt Marge had planned a dinner party in our honour to meet some of the locals and distant relatives. The evening proved to be somewhat of a challenge as we attempted to negotiate befuddled conversations with strangers who loomed in an out of focus. "Tea" and alcohol were a dramatic combination and definitely stimulated the appetite. We made quite an impression at the dinner table as plate after plate of enormous helpings were wolfed down, definitely disqualifying us as potential invitees to any of the other guests homes. Aunt Marge, quite alarmed by this voracious display of gluttony, attempted to dismiss this aberrant behaviour by suggested that we had probably starved on our long bus trip.

On the return journey we had a night layover in Vancouver. We searched for a hotel in the city centre that would meet our stringent budget requirements. Being both dressed in jeans, parkas, toques and backpacks we were definitely a little Bohemian in appearance. Some well intentioned soul directed us to a seedy looking hotel that probably catered to quickie patrons. This was our first encounter with a Canadian hotel and we were not quite prepared for such a Spartan and hostile reception area. The receptionist, who could have passed for Igor in a Transylvanian tale of terror, and was separated from us by heavy duty wire mesh of the type used in remand centers, glowered as I handed over my passport and asked for a single room with a large bed. He fairly flung the passport back at me back at us and informed us that they did not rent out single beds to men with little boys. Both sue and I looked around for the little boy and then back at Igor and asked, in almost perfect unison, "What little boy?" He pointed at Sue and began a lecture on morality, hardly appropriate

for the place we were in, when Sue removed her toque and let her long hair cascaded down her shoulders. It was by no means a luxury room but it had a shower and clean bed linen and we used our sleeping bags as pillows.

The next morning we caught the bus for our trip to Calgary and began our usual interrogation of the people on board. There was a delightful old man in his seventies by the name of Frank Venebles (I will never forget his name) who befriended us. At one of the greasy spoon stops we opted out of purchasing the usual fare and instead made a packet of soup at a picnic table in view of the restaurant and close to the bus. I thought our meal was delicious supplemented with the bread and cheese we were packing along.

Mr. Venebles on the other hand was quite concerned that we were destitute and in need of some fathering. He invited us to stay overnight in his home at Vernon. We accepted his kind invitation. Kentucky Fried Chicken was ordered in and we settled down to good Canadian hospitality. Everything was going just fine until it was time to go to bed. He invited Sue to follow him while asking me to wait. Puzzled I humoured him expecting he was going to provide bed linen for Sue to make up the bed. When he returned he sat down and proceeded to lecture me on the impropriety of sleeping with a young lady to whom I was not betrothed. Furthermore, such indecency would not be perpetuated under his roof. No amount of persuasion, passports or any rational argument would change his mind. Sue and I slept in separate rooms. Well, I did not actually sleep for I suspected that he might have designs of his own regarding Sue or I. Most of the night was spent awake in a cold sweat listening for the faintest sound that would indicate trouble. The next morning his daughter came across to make breakfast and assessing the situation convinced her Dad that we were in fact married.

He must have been somewhat mortified and probably a little remorseful of the lecture he had delivered for he was very kind to us and took us around the town, showing us an apple packing house other places of interest before taking us to Penticton for the night trip to Calgary. We arrived in Calgary early on a Saturday morning. I do not recall the date but it was in the latter half of November 1975 and the

Grey Cup was being held at McMahon stadium the next day. Friends of Sue's mother met us at the Greyhound terminal and whisked us of the city centre before it erupted into a carnival.

To be continued in March Newsletter.



## VALENTINES EROTIC GOURMET EVENING

Once again by popular request we having our special valentines dinner menu where the food is daringly arranged and selected for it's aphrodisiacal properties. If you are sensitive to amorous issues this is not for you. It has been so successful in the past that we are having two evenings. Reservations absolutely essential and this is a ticketed evening.

Warm Intimate Atmosphere

8 to 9 Gourmet Courses

Flowers on the Tables

Lamb as Entrée

Plate Service

Soft Music

And a Night to Remember

Arrive between 6 and 6.30

Dinner starts at 7 prompt

Saturday 14 & 21 Feb.

Price \$50 per person

(Gst & Service  
not included)

